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*TITLE:*

PRAGMATISM

*PLACE:*

[BIRMINGHAM]

*DATE:*

[1909]

Master Negative #

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108  
Z3 Phillips, John Herbert, 1853-1921.  
v.2 Pragmatism, by J. H. Phillips... a paper read  
before the Quid pro quo club. Birmingham, Ala.,  
1909.  
16 p. 23 cm in 25<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cm.

Half title. Volume of pamphlets

Restrictions on Use:

TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35 mm

REDUCTION RATIO: 1/16

IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA IIA IB IIB

DATE FILMED: 3/30/90

INITIALS BAP

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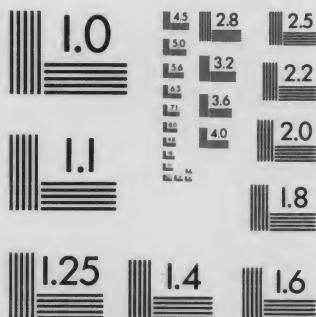
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# PRAGMATISM

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By J. H. PHILLIPS,  
Birmingham, Ala.

1909

## P R A G M A T I S M

\* BY J. H. PHILLIPS, BIRMINGHAM, ALA.

In the Popular Science Monthly for January, 1878, Mr. Charles Pierce, an eminent American mathematician, published an article entitled, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear." Mr. Pierce emphasized the thought that "our beliefs are really rules for action," and that to determine the meaning of an idea, we need only to discover the action or the conduct that idea is fitted to produce. "The whole function of thinking," he said, "is the production of habits, and the true measure of any thought is its influence upon practical life; for us, conduct is its sole significance. However subtle our thought distinctions may be, none of them is so fine that it cannot be expressed in a possible difference of practice. To attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object, then, we need only to consider what conceivable effects of a practical kind the object may involve—what sensations we are to expect from it and what reactions we must prepare. Our conception of these effects, whether immediate or remote, is, then, for us, the whole of our conception of the object, so far as that conception has positive significance at all."

To the principle thus formulated, Mr. Pierce gave the name Pragmatism. The name lay unnoticed for twenty years, until in 1898, Professor James, in an address before the Philosophical Union of the University of California, revived it and made a special application of the principle to religion. Professor John Dewey, formerly of Chicago, but now of Columbia, in his "Studies in Logical Theory," made application of the principle to the province of logic under the name of Intsrumentalism, and Professor Schiller of Oxford later applied the same principle to pure metaphysics under the title of Humanism. Professor James' more recent work entitled Pragmatism, is a volume of lectures first delivered before the Lowell Institute in 1906, and contains the author's most complete exposition of the subject. Since the publication of this work, numerous magazine articles have appeared and the literature of the subject is rapidly increasing. No movement has created such a stir in the philosophic world since the days of Emerson's Transcendentalism, and while, to the average

City Paper Company  
Printers, Birmingham, Alabama  
1909

\*A paper read before the Quid Pro Quo Club.

reader, the whole movement thus far consists in little more than the name, the prediction is currently made that the movement has come to stay and that it is destined to revolutionize the world's philosophic thought.

The word Pragmatism is derived from the Greek word *pragma*, meaning action,—the word from which we get our words *practice* and *practical*. James modestly calls it "A new name for some old ways of thinking." This describes it fairly well, for whatever Pragmatism may mean in philosophy, it may be described as a collective name for certain tendencies in many different fields of thought; it has furnished a unifying point in which the dominant modes of thought in many diverse fields converge. As one reviewer remarks, "Like the Frenchman, who, when he took his first lesson in Rhetoric, was surprised to find that he had been talking prose all his life without knowing it, so mathematicians, scientists, logicians, theologians and metaphysicians, and even those who have never striven to advance beyond the level of plain common sense, discover at last that they have been pragmatists all their lives, and did not know it."

Pragmatism does not pretend to be a new philosophy, nor does it propose to teach any new truth in science, philosophy or theology. All that is claimed for it is the fact that it is a method of testing or validating truth; it professes to teach how truth may be recognized, but not what truth is. As one critic puts it very briefly, "Pragmatism insists on the correlation of philosophy to real life." Instead of turning backward for inspiration and deriving authority from the abstract, the absolute and the eternal, it looks forward and demands that every claimant for our recognition and belief shall be tested by its practical consequences. "Grant an idea or belief to be true," says James, "what concrete difference will its being true make in anyone's actual life? What is truth's cash value in experimental terms?" "True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify. False ideas are those that we cannot." Pragmatism thus apparently stands for no special set of truths or results, but is simply an attitude—"the attitude of looking away from certain assumed principles, first things, categories and abstractions and of looking forward towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts."

To those who have studied Professor James' system of Psychology, his pragmatic method in philosophy will appear as a natural development and a logical consequence of certain psychological tenets with which his name has become identified. In his psychology, James stands forth pre-eminently as the champion of the Ideo-motor theory,—a theory that is in itself pragmatic and constitutes a fitting foundation for the philosophy of pragmatism. The essence of this theory is the contention that all thoughts and ideas have a motor tendency, and that it is the inherent quality of thought to strive for con-

crete expression. Every thought, every idea, and even consciousness itself, involves movement, and seeks incarnation in the concrete world of fact and activity. The world as we find it is therefore nothing but thought reacting upon matter.

Closely associated with the Ideo-motor theory of the intellect, is James' famous theory of the emotions and feelings, commonly known as the James-Lange Theory. Although not so universally accepted, it is equally striking in its pragmatic nature. Professor James contends that our feelings, such as anger, fear, love, hate, joy, grief, shame, pride and their varieties should not be regarded as absolutely individual things. "So long as they are set down as so many eternal and sacred psychic entities, like the old immutable species in natural history, so long all that can be done with them is reverently to catalogue their separate characters, points and effects." But just as we now regard species as the products of heredity and variation, so must we regard the emotions as the products of more general causes. Our feelings are not the cause, but the result of bodily changes. Perception of the exciting fact,—the thought or the idea involves movement only, and in itself, is emotionally colorless. But this perception is the immediate producer of certain bodily changes, and these bodily changes in turn cause the appropriate emotion. In other words, our feelings, instead of being the causes of our instinctive reactions, are effects produced by bodily disturbances and physical movements. Primitive man according to James, did not fight because he was angry, but became angry because he fought; he did not run away because he was afraid, but was afraid because he ran away. Under the conditions of primitive life, the emotions of anger and fear are thus superinduced by bodily changes essential to the struggle for existence. This reversal of the theory of the emotions by the application of the principle of evolution has made James one of the most famous psychologists of modern times.

It is not my purpose to discuss James' psychological tenets further than to show their importance as planks in the platform of Pragmatism. The projection into the sphere of philosophy of these two contentions—namely, that it is the inherent nature of thought to be alive and to move, and that feeling in all its forms is the physiological effect of movement, and the result of our instinctive reactions upon the outer world, is essentially the contribution of Professor James. This is the practical psychological basis of the pragmatic method which proposes to test all thought by its practical consequences, and to evaluate truth according to its power to affect human relations and human activities. While Pragmatism professes to be a method only, and to stand for no particular results in philosophy or religion, it is evident from its very nature that it assumes an attitude which completely shuts out certain metaphysical assumptions of the extreme intellectual-

istic type. It will not tolerate what James calls the solution of the world enigma by the use of certain magical words. The rationalistic type of philosopher names the principle of the Universe, God, Matter, Reason, the Absolute Energy, and then rests as if he possessed the universe itself. When you accept a magical word or an assumed theory as an explanation of the Universe, you are at rest; you have reached the end of your metaphysical quest. "But," says James, "if you follow the pragmatic method, you cannot look on any such word or theory as closing your quest. You must bring out of each its practical cash value, set it at work within the stream of your experience." Pragmatism thus assumes the empiricist attitude in philosophy, and aligns itself with what James describes as the "*toughminded*" in temperament, or those who rely upon facts, and against the "*tender-minded*" or the rationalistic type of mind. Pragmatism is primarily a protest against Platonic Idealism and Hegelian absolutism. James draws this broad temperamental line which divides philosophers into two opposing camps, and, while he claims to apply the pragmatic test impartially to the two kinds of philosophy, he frankly admits at the outset that from its very nature it leans toward the tough-minded empiricist temperament which relies upon the facts of sense experience. The difference between pragmatism and rationalism is tersely expressed by James in this language: "For rationalism, reality is ready made, and complete from all eternity, while for pragmatism, it is still in the making and awaits part of its complexion from the future."

The advocates of the theory of pragmatism use the term in several different senses. James uses the word in the first place as the name of a method of determining the meaning of propositions. A proposition is said to have a definite meaning only under certain conditions, and when it fails to conform to these requirements, pragmatism steps in and puts it out of court. A large class of propositions may thus be eliminated from consideration. To have any import to us, any proposition that may be framed by the human mind must possess the following characteristics:

1. It must have some reference to the future.
2. It must involve some specific purpose; it is volitional and teleological.
3. It must be practical,—that is, it must be capable of verification in concrete human experience.

Pragmatism, standing upon the psychological theory already stated, insists that the human mind is characteristically active and purposive, and all our judgments to have any meaning whatever for us, must be capable of redescending into the stream of our experience. We stand with our faces toward the future, and the significance of the present moment lies in its transitive character. Our faculty of judgment, of necessity, shares in this forward looking nature of all conscious

life. To judge is not to mirror things as they are merely, but to forecast things as they will be, and to adjust ourselves so that we may properly deal with these future facts. Any judgment, then, says the pragmatist, which has no reference to the future, and which cannot be returned to the stream of human experience for verification, has no meaning at all. The meaning of any proposition is precisely stated when you have made clear the specific concrete future experience implied in it.

As an illustration of this fact, Professor James applies the test of pragmatism to the contest between materialism and theism. The materialist contends that the world is a work of matter only, while the theist insists upon a divine spirit as its author. So far as the past of the world goes, it makes no difference which is true. But imagine the world at an end, with all its contents irrevocably given and the idea of a future entirely cut off. Then, let a theist and a materialist apply their rival explanations of its history with equal success; the theist shows how God made it, and the materialist shows how it all resulted from blind physical forces. How can the pragmatist apply his test? "Concepts for him are things to come back into experience with, but by the terms of the hypothesis there is to be no more experience. Both theories have shown their consequences to be identical—their results are all cashed in. In spite of their different names, the two theories mean exactly the same thing and the dispute is purely a verbal contest. Matter and God in that event mean the same thing—namely, the power that could make this completed world. As a principle of the universe, God is no better than matter, unless he promises more that is of actual experiential value. The proposition under these imposed conditions must be dismissed by pragmatism as meaningless. If, on the other hand, we grant that the world is uncompleted, that it has a future, the alternative of theism or materialism becomes intensely practical. Mr. Spencer, to avoid clerical implications on the one hand and the idea of grossness on the other, calls the primal mystery the "unknowable," instead of saying either God or matter. If philosophy were simply retrospective, he would be an excellent pragmatist; but philosophy is also prospective, and after finding what the world has done, still asks, "What does the world promise?" Theism and materialism taken retrospectively are indifferent, but taken prospectively point to wholly different outlooks of experience. Materialism by its mechanical explanations promises no continuance, but leads to dismal dissolution. It means the denial that the moral order is eternal and cuts off hope, while theism affirms the moral order of the universe and returns into the stream of experience with the hope and promise of a successful issue.

Likewise, any definition that is incapable of application and verification within the range of future human experience

is worthless. The school boy is strictly pragmatic when he defines a knife as "something to whittle with," and an orange as "a fruit you can eat."

But pragmatism has another meaning no less significant to philosophy than the one we have described. The term is used not only to determine the meaning of propositions, but also to indicate a certain theory as to the nature of truth; it is a method of determining comparative values and a practical criterion of validity in the realm of philosophy. This carries us far into the deep waters of logic and epistemology, and we incur the danger of drifting or capsizing. I shall attempt a brief statement of the theory, however ambiguous it may be. In general, what entitles a proposition to be regarded as true, is its functional value as an instrument which leads to the satisfaction of a vital need, or to the accomplishment of some indispensable activity. Or, quoting Professor James, "a proposition is true in so far as it will work," and "ideas become true in so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relations with the rest of our experience."

Truth depends upon its consequences. There is no absolute truth existing immutably and *a priori* in a supercelestial world, and descending magically into passively recipient souls as rationalistic philosophers from Plato to Bradley and Royce have held. An assertion to be true must have meaning; and in so far as it has meaning, it is functional and has consequences that are practical and good. If the consequences turn out to be valuable for our purposes, the assertion establishes itself at least, as provisionally true. The truth of an assertion depends upon its application. Abstract truths are not fully truths at all; or they are truths out of use. In common life this principle is understood. Truth depends upon context, upon who said it, to whom, when and how and why. The abstract statement "two and two make four" is always incomplete; it waits for application. We must know what twos and fours are meant. It would not be true of chairs and tables, joys and sorrows or of drops of water. "Truths to become true and to stay true, must be used;" they are rules of action. A rule that is not applied rules nothing. It is true only in so far as it rules within a definite sphere of application marked out by experiment. All truth must thus have a human interest, and man is entitled to presume that he himself is the measure of his experience. This is what Schiller calls Humanism, and is differentiated from pragmatism as being broader and more comprehensive. The discovery of the principle Schiller attributes to Protagoras the Sophist, who, 450 years before the Christian Era, proclaimed the dictum that "Man is the measure of all things," and deduced the theory that man is the maker of truth, which is the useful and the good in human life; that all truth depends upon human interest; that absolute, immutable eternal reality

does not yet exist, but when it does exist, it will be that which fulfills our every purpose, and which therefore we will not seek to change, but only to maintain. He said to Socrates and Plato and the other idealists of his time, "Your mistake lies in supposing such a reality to exist already as a unity or harmony, and as something we can start from. The absolutely real can be reached only through the apparently real by remoulding it into a perfect harmony." "Mere knowing," says Schiller, "is incapable of making or altering reality, merely because it is an intellectual abstraction, which strictly speaking does not exist." In the pragmatic conception, knowing is a prelude to doing. Mere knowing is a fragment of a total process which in its unmitigated integrity always ends in action which tests the truth. Hence we must not confine ourselves to the intellectual fraction of the process, but consider the completed process as issuing in action and altering reality. In his work on logical theory, Dr. Dewey also emphasizes the fact that all truth, all theory and even thinking itself is instrumental. It is to be regarded not as an absolute, eternal reality, but as a temporary instrument to be remoulded by human experience and to be used as an instrument in the attainment of ultimate truth, and in reaching the ultimate real.

"Our account of truth," says James, "is an account of truths in the plural, of processes of leading realized *in rebus* and having only this quality in common, that they pay." "Truth for us is simply a collective name for verification processes, just as wealth, health and strength are names for other processes connected with life, and also pursued because it pays to pursue them. Truth is *made*, just as wealth, health and strength are made, in the course of experience."

The contrast between the pragmatist and the monistic rationalist with regard to their views concerning the structure of the universe, James presents somewhat dramatically as follows: "On the pragmatist side we have only one edition of the universe, unfinished, growing in all sorts of places, especially in the places where thinking beings are at work." "On the rationalist side we have a universe in many editions, one real one, the infinite folio, or *edition de luxe* eternally complete; and then the various finite editions, full of false readings, distorted and mutilated each in its own way."

The rationalist thus assumes a preexisting and eternal universe of truth, an immutable ideal, unexposed to the accidents of experience, to which the finite many are firmly anchored. "Behind our *de facto* world there must be a *de jure* duplicate fixed and previous, with all that can happen here already there *in posse*. The truth of human experience according to the rationalist is a more or less accurate copy of this eternal reality which persists in calling upon us to agree with it, simply because its claim is unconditional and transcendent. To the pragmatist, truth is a process based upon

the facts of human experience, and "the true is only the expedient in the way of our thinking, just as the right is only the expedient in the way of our behaving." Pragmatism thus reiterates the position of Greek Philosophy by identifying the true with the good and the useful.

But it must not be supposed that the pragmatist does away with principles and abstract truths. The difference is a matter of outlook and emphasis. "Our ready-made ideal framework for all sorts of possible objects follows from the very structure of our thinking," says James. "We can no more play fast and loose with these abstract relations than we can do so with our sense experiences. They coerce us; we must treat them consistently, whether or not we like the results." But to him principles, truths, beliefs, are funded experience. Such principles or truths may be accepted by us as *a priori*, but they have not always been so accepted. On the other hand, they have been derived from experience, and to live at all must be capable of verification by experience. Truth lives for the most part on a credit system; it passes so long as it goes unchallenged, like a bank note; but this means that there is a point of verification somewhere. The pragmatist believes in the ideal and the absolute, not as an origin, but as an ultimate to which all finite processes point. He takes the world's perfection, not as a necessary principle, but as a *terminus ad quem*.

It now remains to suggest some of the practical applications of the method of pragmatism. The natural sciences—physics, chemistry, geology, etc., are so plainly pragmatic in their methods that any illustration would seem superfluous. Scientific principles and formulas are worthless except as they are verified by the tests of the laboratory. Scientific assumptions and theories are true only so far as they serve as working hypotheses—or truths *pro tempore* and instrumental.

In the sphere of government and economics it is unnecessary to prove the contention of pragmatism—that principles and standards of value change with the flux of human experience. History is a graveyard of dead principles that once held sway as eternal truths and absolute rights. The divine right of kings, and human slavery, are no longer held as divinely ordained and immutable principles. They have yielded to new truths evolved by the process of human experience. Goodness, honesty and integrity are valued not as abstract virtues, but because they work; efficiency is the keynote of the age.

The pragmatic tendencies of modern education require no illustration. All education today to be of worth must be of service. Knowledge for its own sake, truth for truth's sake, and art for art's sake are decadent phrases in the language of the schools.

In the field of logic, Professor Dewey by his instrumental view of truth threatens the very foundation of the traditional method. The "correspondence-with-reality" view of truth, "together with the realisms and idealisms in which it is involved have been so seriously shaken that the logician is already casting about for a new theory of logic."

The province of metaphysics contains important problems to some of which James applies the method of pragmatism and which Schiller in his work on Humanism treats critically and effectively. Among these are the problems of Substance, Determinism and Freewill, the problem of Design, and the problem of the One and the Many. To treat these problems of metaphysics in the light of pragmatism would carry us so far afield and into such mists and fogs that I deem the effort too perilous for me at the present. These problems are important, however, because they underlie the world's theology and its philosophy. Let me briefly present some of James' conclusions: The old scholastic notion of Substance has but one pragmatic application, and that is found in the doctrine of transubstantiation as applied to the Eucharist. Berkeley's treatment of material substance is strictly pragmatic when he makes the meaning and significance of matter to consist solely of our sensations of color, form, hardness and the like. The notion of spiritual substance was likewise treated pragmatically by Locke and Hume when they reduced the problem of personal identity to its practical value in terms of experience. The soul is good or true for just so much as is revealed by consciousness and no more. The problem of substance is at the basis of any philosophical view of the world and leads to the contention between the materialistic and theistic explanations.

Pragmatism considers each impartially and with its eyes characteristically on the future concludes: "Spiritualistic faith in all its forms deals with a world of promise, while materialism's sun sets in a sea of disappointment." The principle of design as a rationalistic proof of the existence of God is worthless for pragmatism, except as our faith concretes it into something theistic—a term of promise. "We can study our God," says the pragmatist, "only by studying his creation. But we can enjoy our God, if we have one, in advance of all that labor." Upon this point James makes a significant remark: "I myself believe that the evidence for God lies primarily in inner personal experiences."

Pragmatism naturally welcomes indeterminism and the freedom of the will as a melioristic doctrine—because "it holds up improvement as at least possible, whereas determinism assures us that our whole notion of possibility is born of human ignorance and that necessity and impossibility between them rule the destinies of the world." With regard to the problem of Monism and Pluralism, pragmatism admits the total-

ity or coherence of the universe, but cannot accept any unity in advance of empirical ascertainment. "Under the present conditions of human experience, the hypothesis of a world imperfectly unified, and possibly always to remain so, must be entertained as the most acceptable working hypothesis."

The application to theology and religion involves a more critical discussion of its underlying metaphysical problems than I can give here. Speaking broadly, pragmatism recognizes three philosophical attitudes with regard to the notion of the world's possibilities,—a notion that underlies the whole question of religion. Rationalism intellectually falls back upon the absolute principle of unity as the ground of possibility for the multitude of existing facts, and emotionally regards that unity as a guarantee that all will come out right in the end. The rationalist lies back upon the principle of absolute perfection as a guarantee of security and regards the world's salvation as inevitable. This is the attitude of philosophic optimism, and leads to quietism or indifferentism. You simply look back or lie back upon the absolute, confident that you are safe and that the world is safe. "Pragmatism," says James, "must respect this attitude, for it has massive historic vindication."

The second attitude is that of philosophic pessimism, as represented by Schopenhauer and others who are so unhappy and miserable as to believe the world's salvation impossible. Midway between these stands the doctrine of meliorism, which treats the salvation of the world neither as a foregone conclusion nor as an impossibility. To this view pragmatism inclines, and the doctrine of meliorism is then contrasted with that of optimism. The former makes man an active agent—a co-worker with God in securing ultimate results. Life is a risk and a real adventure. The latter eliminates all risk and provides in advance a scheme of insurance against individual or cosmic disaster. This is essentially the attitude of the Buddhist, who is afraid of more experience and seeks Nirvana as an escape from the adventures of this world of sense.

And yet, the pragmatist concedes the value of this attitude to the sick soul and to the discouraged in life. When our own life breaks down, it is a comfort to fall back upon the "Everlasting Arms,"—to take the prodigal son attitude, to give up all—fall on our father's neck and be absorbed into the absolute life as a drop of water melts into the river or the sea. Professor James admits the possibility of pragmatically reconciling the two attitudes, but, speaking for himself, says, "I find myself willing to take the universe to be really dangerous and adventurous, without therefore backing out and crying 'no play.' I am willing to think that the prodigal son attitude, open to us as it is in many vicissitudes, is not the right and final attitude towards the whole of life. . . . I can believe

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in the ideal as an ultimate, not as an origin, and as an extract not the whole." The genuine pragmatist, he insists, is "willing to live on a scheme of uncertified possibilities which he trusts; willing to pay with his own person, if needs be, for the realization of the ideals which he frames.

This tendency towards a more active, robust and aggressive religious life, and away from the inactive, contemplative, supine and supplicative attitude, described by Professor James, is today evidenced in many ways that will readily occur to us. The prayer meeting is no longer functional in the life of the church as it was in former years; the experience meeting of fifty years ago is a vanishing institution. Church hymnology as an expression of religious sentiment and experience has undergone a radical change in twenty-five years. Many of the old popular hymns have been abandoned and others though retained in the hymn books are seldom used. I remember as a boy the ecstasy of satisfaction with which the old people sang:

"We are but children under age,  
Awaiting still our heritage;  
The promise of our Father's will  
Our hearts' desire must yet fulfill."

We no longer sympathize with the supine and inactive attitude of heirs, waiting for an estate; our heritage, on the other hand, is here and now, and religious duty calls upon us to occupy it and to improve it. Religion today is more pragmatic, because it recognizes the real core of the matter to be practical life and conduct in the present tense, not merely a sigh for the time—

"When I can read my title clear  
To mansions in the skies."

In certain moods of religious experience, as noted by Professor James, there may be pragmatic value in the sentiment:

"I'm a pilgrim and I'm a stranger,  
I can tarry, I can tarry, but a night."

It is difficult, however, to see what religious mood, unless it be the abandonment of all life, can justify the rhapsody:—

"Nothing either great or small,  
Remains for me to do;  
Jesus died and paid it all,  
Yes, all the debt I owe."

And another hymn of my boyhood days always impressed

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me as foreign to human experience, religious or otherwise:

"I want to be an angel,  
And with the angels stand,  
A crown upon my forehead,  
A harp within my hand."

Old Martin Luther, whatever his metaphysical presuppositions, in his immortal hymn, "Ein Feste Berg ist unser Gott," was pragmatist enough to leave a loop hole for experience and human agency in the final triumph of truth, when he sang:

"And though this world with devils filled,  
Should threaten to undo us,  
We will not fear, for God hath willed  
His truth to triumph through us."

It will be interesting to note the position of pragmatism with regard to Reason and Faith as factors in religion. Reason is not a faculty, but stands for a group of habits useful in carrying on the business of life. Among these habits may be mentioned the power of inhibiting our instinctive reactions until we break up the complex by reflection and analysis. This analysis involves thinking which implies the use of concepts; these concepts ultimately depend upon certain principles that have long been regarded as fundamental truths or *axioms*, but which pragmatism regards as mere postulates. A postulate is not a self-evident, necessary truth. It is an assumption whose validity is uncertain until tested by experiment. It is established *ex post facto* by its practical success. In so far as reasoning rests on postulates, our acceptance implies faith, or a belief in a verification yet to come. Back of reason therefore, in science as well as in religion, we find Faith. All the truths of science presuppose faith. Faith is defined as a "mental attitude, which, for purposes of action, is willing to take upon trust valuable and desirable beliefs, before they have been proved true, but in the hope that this attitude may promote their verification." By this definition, Faith is (1) an attitude of will—of the whole personality, not of the abstract intellect. (2) It is concerned with values and eliminates the worthless and unimportant. (3) It involves risks and real dangers, and is therefore to be taken seriously. (4) It involves verification by its practical working as an essential element. In every instance, faith must justify itself by works.

Pragmatism thus establishes the mutual relations of Reason and Faith both in science and religion. It gives a practical test by which spurious faith may be eliminated, but objects to the abstract intellectual process that depersonalizes truth and dehumanizes faith. Both are distinctly human,—

both are personal. Covering the vast diversity of faiths in the world, shall we seek to eliminate all competitors but one? Here the pragmatist asks a few suggestive questions: (1) The processes of reason and faith are still in flux and incomplete; what right have we to expect final results from an incomplete process? (2) What right have we to assume that even ultimate truth must be one and the same for all? (3) Should we be alarmed because the growth of truth proceeds with such exuberance along divergent lines in religion; do we not find the same diversity of interpretation in science, philosophy and economics? (4) May not the divergent beliefs and plurality of opinions entertained constitute the data necessary to an adequate theory of knowledge and of religion?

Pragmatism touches the divergent concrete religious faiths and beliefs of mankind sympathetically, and respects the religious endowment of human nature whatever its evidences or modes of expression may be. All religions work pragmatically to some extent, in spite of their theoretical difficulties, but these theoretical and theological difficulties are unimportant, because they are either non-functional or pragmatically equivalents. The really functional parts of all religions are practically identical. Religion will be benefited and strengthened therefore by getting rid of these non-functional accretions and appendages, inherited from former ages. It should unburden itself of those mystical metaphysical speculations which have always been too obscure to be truly functional in life and conduct.

To really promote the cause of religion, we must restore the human predicate to our completed judgments; we must make our thought processes complete, by restoring the element of action; we must renounce that form of faith which stands for intellectual indolence and unwillingness to think and through our personal volition inculcate that robuster form, which by a continual quest for verification, seeks to complete and justify itself by works.

For the philosophy of pragmatism, Religion as well as Science must have her postulates, upon which all reasoning must be based. Behind her reasoning there must be faith. Back of her postulates there must be "the Will to Believe." She is willing to accept as her working postulates such concepts as God and Immortality, Freedom of the Will and Prayer, Confession and Sacrament; but each in turn is called upon to give an adequate account of itself in our human experience, and to justify itself by proving its validity. There are no narrow boundaries set for the province of religious faith, provided it must always remain within the range of human experience. But the pragmatist unequivocally favors the religious attitude of healthy-mindedness, rather than that of the mentally diseased. While all faith must be validated by its results in human experience, Professor James would not place

any arbitrary limitations even upon the realm of experience. He says: "I firmly disbelieve, myself, that our human experience is the highest form of experience extant in the universe. I believe rather that we stand in much the same relation to the whole of the universe, as our canine and feline pets do to the whole of human life. But just as many of the dog's and cat's ideals coincide with our ideals, and the dogs and cats have daily living proof of the fact. So we may well believe, on the proofs that religious experience affords, that higher powers exist and are at work to save the world, on ideal lines, similar to our own." The expression of this "overbelief," as Professor James calls it, is interesting because it explains his attitude towards Psychical Research, and toward such supernatural beliefs as spiritualism, Christian science and other divergent faiths—an attitude that has subjected him to severe criticism." If such overbeliefs are essential to the individual's religion, he thinks we should treat them with tenderness and tolerance so long as they are not intolerant themselves. But more than this, his idea of the *subconscious* and the *supraconscious*, makes possible for him the inflow into our conscious life, of energy and power from other spheres of consciousness, with which we may come in contact and communion through the "faith state and the prayer state."

This paper is submitted as an imperfect statement, without criticism, of a theory that is as yet but imperfectly developed, but which in my judgment is destined to influence our civilization more profoundly than any movement of the past and to prepare the way for a more aggressive attitude towards life's problems, whether educational or social, economic or religious.